

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



*Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Phone 1-800-821-5821 / Fax 207-287-7443*

*****ADVISORY – Important Information*****

2009PHADV011

TO: All Maine Health Care Providers

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: **Maine CDC Update - Swine Influenza Screening and Laboratory Testing Guidance for Health Care Providers**

DATE: April 25, 2009

TIME: 12:25 p.m.

PAGES: 3

PRIORITY: High

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)

Maine CDC Update - Swine Influenza Screening and Laboratory Testing Guidance for Health Care Providers, 25 April 2009

The US CDC has identified eight new cases of a novel swine influenza A (H1N1) virus first identified on April 17 in two children in southern California. The six additional cases were reported in San Diego County (three cases) and Imperial County, California (one case), and in Guadalupe County, Texas (two cases). The average age of these confirmed cases is 16, and all have fully recovered. In addition, US CDC has confirmed that the same unique strain of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus has been isolated among specimens from patients in Central Mexico, where there appears to be an emerging outbreak.

No cases of swine flu have been reported in Maine or New England. Although seasonal influenza continues to be detected in Maine, influenza activity has been declining and is currently sporadic.

Maine CDC health officials have been in close contact with officials at U.S. CDC the past few days as well as increasing capacity to further address the situation, including increasing influenza tracking and public health laboratory capacity (Maine CDC's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory=HETL) to perform rapid typing of influenza.

At this time, Maine healthcare providers should consider the possibility of swine influenza in patients presenting with febrile respiratory illness who:

1. Live in San Diego County or Imperial County, California or San Antonio, Texas or Mexico (risk areas under investigation)
2. Have traveled to San Diego and/or Imperial County, California or San Antonio, Texas or
3. Have been in contact with ill persons from these areas in the 7 days prior to their illness onset.

If you suspect swine influenza:

1) Obtain a respiratory swab for viral testing using a dacron tipped swab with an aluminum or plastic shaft and inoculate into viral transport medium, label with patient information and refrigerate. Send to the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) for testing. DO NOT send to a referral laboratory instead of the HETL. Check with your lab if you are unsure of the appropriate swab for viral testing.

2) Call Maine CDC 24 hour consultation line (1-800-821-5821) to report a suspected case and obtain testing for influenza at the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory. HETL will perform influenza RT-PCR tests and subtyping for Influenza A positive specimens.

3) As always, persons presenting in the healthcare setting should use appropriate respiratory and hand hygiene.

Antiviral Treatment:

Antiviral treatment for confirmed or suspected ill case of swine influenza virus infection may include either oseltamivir or zanamavir, with no preference given at this time. Recommendations for use of antivirals may change as data on antiviral susceptibilities become available. Because seasonal influenza may also be circulating at this time, Maine CDC recommends following the current CDC seasonal antiviral treatment guidance for seasonal influenza when swine flu is also a possibility but not confirmed: oseltamivir plus rimantidine or zanamivir alone (see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/recommendations.htm>).

Please see CDC's swine flu website for complete information (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/>)

CDC's swine flu and infection control and treatment guidance:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm>

Maine-Specific Information as well as links to CDC is available at www.mainepublichealth.gov.

This situation is expected to evolve over the coming days to weeks, and guidance will change as necessary when new information becomes available.